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THE WORK OF THE WAR MEAT BOARD

Broadcast by Harry E. Reed, Chief, Livestock & Meats Branch, Food Distribution Administration, in the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Tuesday, June 1, 1943, over stations associated with the Blue Network.

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KADDERLY: On May 17, the War Food Administration and Office of Price Administration announced the establishment of the War Meat Board. Today Harry E. Reed, chief of the Livestock and Meats Branch of the Food Distribution Administration will tell us something about the job the Board will tackle. Mr. Reed, as you see it, what problems brought about the formation of the War Meat Board?

REED: Well, Mr. Kadderly, the chief reason such a board is needed is that big, intangible thing called "Supply and demand." Livestock is produced and slaughtered in just about every section of the United States. In some areas the supply is above the demand; in others, especially where we find large concentrations of industry, the demand is of course far above the local supply. In normal times, the law of supply and demand is expressed in terms of price, and brings about a well-balanced movement of meat supplies from the producing to the consuming areas. But, of course, these aren't normal times. Man-made regulations have been substituted for economic law, and this creates many problems that did not exist when supply and demand factors were free to operate. So the War Food Administration, the Armed Forces, and the Office of Price Administration got together and adopted the plan for the War Meat Board...which we hope will help straighten out some of the complex problems that face us.

KADDERLY: The Board will act as a coordinating agency between these groups...

REED: Yes, so far as supply and demand are concerned, but that's only part of the meat management program. In addition, OPA has a consumer meat rationing program, plus dollars and cents price ceilings on meat at the retail level. FDA is trying to bring commercial livestock slaughter into channels where it can be controlled and the meat made available for the War purposes. These are very important parts of the whole program to bring about an equitable distribution of meat to civilians.

KADDERLY: And as a result of these programs, a proper balance should be brought about between the amounts of meat available for civilian, military and other requirements.

REED: That's right. But I don't want anyone to get the idea that we regard the War Meat Board as a cure-all for our troubles. It is NOT an over-all policy-making Board, but rather a group which will take into account the total amount of meat actually available, and recommend how it should be divided in the light of requirements. And I can tell you right now that everybody concerned won't get all the meat he'd like...but he should be able to get his fair share of what there is.

KADDERLY: Now, Mr. Reed, will you tell us who serves on the Board?

REED: Well, the Chairman of the Board will be a representative of the War Food Administration. Then, there's a representative of the Armed Forces; a representative of the War Food Administration responsible for Lend-Lease and other Government purchases of meat; one from the Food Rationing Division of OPA; another from the Food Price Division of OPA; and the consultants from the industry for pork supplies, for beef supplies; for veal, lamb and mutton supplies, and for canned

meat supplies.

KADDERLY: That's a nine-point Board...small enough to work well together, and yet large enough to represent all major groups of supply and demand. What about the livestock and meat industry...where does it come into the picture?

REED: The Board will meet in Chicago, right in the heart of the meat packing industry, and right next door to the principal meat-producing areas. The Board can call in at any time representatives of all segments of the industry and of other Government agencies to advise and assist in carrying out its duties.

KADDERLY: It sounds like a very workable system. Now, suppose you tell us how the Board intends to go about its job.

REED: The Board will meet regularly on Monday of each week to ascertain as accurately as possible the supply of meat available for that week to the major demand categories. Then we will determine the courses of action that should be followed in the division of that meat supply.

KADDERLY: But as I understand it, the Board will be working with actual supplies. Am I right?

REED: Yes, you're right...Mr. Kadderly. The allocating agencies in Washington representing the Armed Forces, Lend-Lease, and civilians, work on a quarterly basis, and also make estimates of the needs of each group on a yearly basis. They will continue to do this. The objective of the War Meat Board will be to translate these allocations into terms of actual supplies, and to recommend such revisions in the quarterly and yearly allocations as prove to be necessary. Specific operations will be something like this. Suppose the Army representative reports that the Army is unable to procure adequate quantities of beef for the armed forces...the War Meat Board immediately makes an analysis of the situation to determine why the Army is not getting its beef requirements. The Board's findings might show that the demand for beef under the point Rationing Program is excessive, and might recommend to the rationing representative on the Board that point values of beef be increased. If the rationing representative concurred in this recommendation, he would then, by virtue of the authority vested in him by the Administrator of the Office of Price Administration, take the necessary steps to get the point values of beef raised. The administrative setup of the Board is such that will permit problems like this to be analyzed and acted upon quickly, and speed is vital in handling problems pertaining to meat.

Suppose the rationing representative of the Board reports that in certain regions in the country there is not sufficient meat to take care of the demand under the Rationing Program...the Board's analysis of this problem might show that there is a seasonal decrease in meat production in that particular area, and it would recommend that the Government Procurement Agencies temporarily reduce or discontinue their purchases in that area until the supply situation is corrected.

KADDERLY: (ad lib conclusion)

